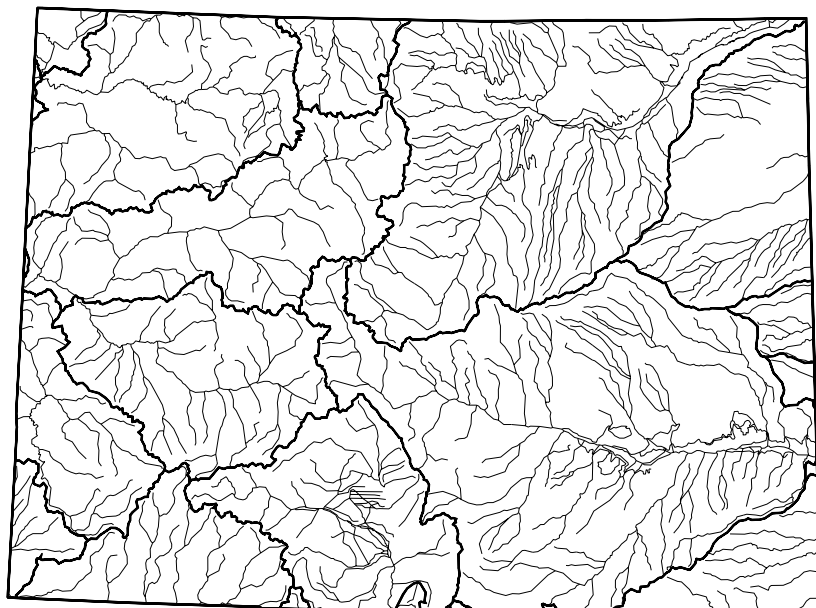


# Colorado



— Basin Boundaries  
(USGS 6-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

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## Surface Water Quality

Colorado reports that 96% of its surveyed river miles and 88% of its surveyed lake acres have good water quality that fully support aquatic life uses. Metals are the most frequently identified pollutant in rivers and lakes. Mining and agriculture are leading sources of pollution in both rivers and lakes.

Colorado did not report on the condition of wetlands.

## Ground Water Quality

Ground water quality in Colorado ranges from excellent in mountain areas where snow fall is heavy, to poor in certain alluvial aquifers of major rivers. Naturally occurring soluble minerals along with human activities are responsible for significant degradation of some aquifers. Nitrates and salts from agricultural activities have contaminated many of Colorado's shallow, unconfined aquifers. In mining areas, acidic water and metals contaminate aquifers. Colorado protects ground water quality with statewide numeric criteria for organic chemicals, a narrative standard to maintain ambient conditions or maximum contaminant levels of inorganic chemicals and metals, and specific use classifications and standards for ground water areas. Colorado also regulates discharges to ground water from wastewater treatment impoundments and land application systems with a permit system.

## Programs to Restore Water Quality

Colorado's Water Quality Control Division recently reorganized to streamline the Division and to make it more responsive to major new trends in water quality management. The cornerstone of the new organization is the creation of watershed coordinators and watershed teams for the four major watersheds in the state: Arkansas/







Rio Grande, Lower Colorado, Upper Colorado, and South Platte. The watershed coordinators make the Division more responsive to local communities and their concerns. The watershed teams give the Division the ability to address key issues using an integrated approach, which will lead to more effective solutions.

Other programs in Colorado include the state's Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund, nonpoint source control program, and permits programs.

## Programs to Assess Water Quality

In 1992, Colorado changed its monitoring approach from a state-wide network of routine sites and special studies to basin-specific monitoring of one major watershed per year. During the 1996-1997 cycle, the Lower Colorado/Gunnison and Upper Colorado basins were monitored. The basin monitoring program has several long-term objectives such as ensuring there is an adequate database to study changes over time, addressing spatial and temporal variability in water quality, evaluating the impact of point and nonpoint sources on water quality, determining lake trophic status, and developing a database for biological water quality criteria. Colorado plans to devote more resources to monitoring targeted watersheds in the four basins to support the development of TMDLs.

## Individual Use Support in Colorado

Designated Use <sup>a</sup>	Percent				
	Good (Fully Supporting)	Good (Threatened)	Fair (Partially Supporting)	Poor (Not Supporting)	Not Attainable
<b>Rivers and Streams (Total Miles = 107,403)<sup>b</sup></b>					
 Total Miles Assessed	96				
29,363		-	4	1	-
	-	-	-	-	-
 18,952 <sup>c</sup>	-	-	1	<1	99
<b>Lakes (Total Acres = 164,029)</b>					
 Total Acres Assessed	88				
59,660		-	11	1	-
	50	-	50	<1	-
	-	-	-	-	-

- Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.

<sup>a</sup> A subset of Colorado's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the state's 305(b) report for a full description of the state's uses.

<sup>b</sup> Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.

<sup>c</sup> All of Colorado's rivers marked not attainable for swimming were not necessarily surveyed.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.